Post 2015 Agenda Declaration
Discussion draft paper
Comments by Brazil
20 February 2015

[GENERAL COMMENT]

Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the G77/China and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

The discussion document needs to reflect an appropriate balance in regards to the SDGs that were negotiated in the Open Working Group, and to provide a vision for the future. Issues that are really transformative, such as promoting equality and changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns should not be downplayed, as they currently are, while Goal 16 is being selectively overemphasized. In fact, it is the only goal out of 17 to deserve a single paragraph in your short and concise document. We can appreciate brevity. However, let's not be brief at the expense of positions that are supported by many, if not a majority of Member States.

Some important issues are missing altogether. I wish to mention one in particular, of critical importance for the future, which is Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for development. ICTs will have huge implications for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, both as enablers for its implementation and as providers of knowledge and content for inclusive sustainable development. They deserve a specific place in the Declaration.

[SPECIFIC COMMENTS]

PARAGRAPH 1:
The new agenda should speak of creating the conditions for social inclusion and combating inequality. In the Rio+20 conference we agreed that market forces alone would not promote inclusive sustainable development. We think this is a fundamental statement to be made at the political level, and a key guiding principle for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs. We need to strengthen the role of States, build up local ownership and capacities, and to ensure the required national policy space for developing

countries to be in a position to embrace their own responsibilities in terms sustainable development.

PARAGRAPH 2:
It is not enough to state that some MDGs were not attained. We need to spell out the lessons learned, and to recognize that commitments on the means of implementation fell way short of the mark, and that this was one of the main reasons for not achieving all MDGs.

The transition from MDGs to SDGs should be addressed. The existing so-called "crucial framework for development", mentioned in paragraph 2, is not adequate for implementing an expanded agenda that is universal and integrated such as the one we are about to adopt.

PARAGRAPH 3:

This paragraph speaks of inter-linkages between poverty and exclusion, unemployment, climate change, conflicts and humanitarian crises. Many more items could be added to the list. But we are missing the fundamental inter-linkage that was placed at the centre of the Rio+20 consensus by our Heads of State and Government; one that integrates social inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability, on the basis of which we formulated the goals and targets contained in the report of the OWG. In other words, the basic inter-linkage that needs to be emphasized in the Declaration is the one that articulates the three dimensions of sustainable development.

PARAGRAPH 4:

The concept of shared responsibility contradicts CBDR. It does not take into account the idea of differentiation. If responsibility for sustainable development were now to be shared, we would be providing countries who most exploited resources and other countries in the past (colonialism and war) a clean slate, and basically relieving them of their commitments and obligations in terms of development assistance and special and differential treatment for developing countries.

Simultaneously, we would be making poor developing countries equally responsible, alongside rich developed ones, for achieving sustainable

development, no matter how different or asymmetric their respective capacities to do so.

If we are taking a leap towards a development agenda that is universal and applicable to all, we need at the same time to ensure formal recognition of the different needs and capacities of countries through differentiation.

Furthermore, we cannot speak of shared responsibility in a context in which power; resources and representation continue to be unevenly distributed, particularly between developed and developing countries.

There can be no meaning in the notion of shared responsibilities in an international system in which asymmetries are perpetuated in the main bodies of global governance as a result of blatant exclusion/under-representation of developing countries.

If we want to be forward-looking we should speak of "shared prosperity" instead. This is a positive equalizer we can all understand and work with. It should be the guiding principle and aspiration of our transformative agenda.

PARAGRAPH 5:
Goal 16 is inadequately mentioned in isolation in paragraph 5, causing grave distortion in our understanding of the SDG set. It should be deleted, or, alternatively, referenced in the appropriate order of relevance after the major goals on poverty eradication, social inclusion and environmental sustainability (the core issues of our agenda).

PARAGRAPH 7:
Here, we find there are two notions in need of greater clarification.

The first one sets an extremely high standard for developing countries, namely, that "no target will be considered met unless it is met for all economic and social groupings". Instead of raising the bar so unattainably high, we need, quite the contrary, to encourage developing countries to pursue progress in any goal and target. Therefore, we propose a formulation to the effect that that every progress made in any goal or target should be fully recognized, valued and accounted for.

The second notion, which we share, asserts the need to prioritise the most vulnerable. This could be strengthened by making each and every such

group statistically visible in the data and indicator set, and by adopting their progress as special markers of overall progress of the Agenda - the idea being that if we have reached the most vulnerable we would have done the same for the less vulnerable ones too.

The concept of "leaving no one behind" seems charitable and intrinsically good, but carries with it a fundamental flaw, as Brazil mentioned yesterday in the event with the Major Groups. The problem is that it says nothing about the wealthiest groups who may be detrimentally ahead, the so-called 1%. The "Leaving no one behind" formula does not address issues of fairness and equity, nor the probability that excessive wealth accumulation by few may be socially and economically detrimental; nor does it question the legitimacy or even legality of such highly accumulated wealth, the means through which it might have been obtained or its contribution to sustainable development. That is why we prefer using unambiguous terms that were consecrated in the Rio+20 guidelines under which we work - notably, the overarching goal of poverty eradication and combating inequality. Taken together, these two notions involve, affect and engage in a truly transformative way everyone in our societies - no one is left behind and no one receives a blank check.

PARAGRAPH 9:
CBDR should be explicitly mentioned as it underpins the concept of differentiation that is at the root of our committment to engage. Universality and differentiation must go hand in hand.

PARAGRAPH 10:
There is reference to COP-21 in Paris, next December. UNFCCC is certainly relevant for sustainable development; but so are other frameworks and processes deserving equal attention.

We need to call for the conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations in a manner that delivers on its development mandate, fundamentally linked to the elimination of trade distorting agricultural subsidies.

We also need to mention the importance of reforming institutions of global governance and international financial institutions in order to allow for greater voice and representation of developing countries.

PARAGRAPH 11:
The "key messages" for the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be coherent with the three dimensions of sustainable development and reflect all the SDGs in a balanced manner.

The six elements proposed in the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General may be a useful idea. Not all of them, however, adequately convey the priority and essence of our conceptual framework.

In order to capture the new vision of sustainable development, with the integrated three pillars of Rio+20 (social inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability), it makes much more sense to speak of People, Planet and Property, to which we propose adding Partnership, in reference to the Means of Implementation.

PARAGRAPH 12:
The importance of technology facilitation for the achievement of the new agenda should be highlighted. Technology is a driver of transformation and lies at the heart of socal inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability, as was acknowledged in the Rio+20 document "The Furutre we Want", in the Open Working Group report containing the SDGs and in the Synthesis Report of the Secretary General.

Paragraph 13:
The concept of "mutual accountability" has not been discussed or agreed to. It is not an established feature of the High-Level Political Forum. We should not prejudge the outcome of ongoing discussons on follow-up and review.

Accountability should be voluntary and at the national level. The concept of "mutual accountability" would not comply with this parameter. Furthermore, "mutual accountability", or a peer review mechanism inspired by the one in the Human Rights Council, would be unaceptably intrusive, and incompatible wth an agenda that is not legally binding. The Post-2015 Development Agenda should be voluntarily embraced by countries; not imposed upon them.

For follow-up and review, we propose using a body already endorsed at the Rio+20 Summit, as well as by the General Assembly, namely, the HLPF.

Governments should be accountable to their population. At the international level the review process should be voluntary and include follow up and review of commitments on means of implementation, as defined in HLPF resolution.

PARAGRAPH 14:
The SG's synthesis report should be recognized as a valuable input. However, it is different in nature from agreed outcomes of intergovernmental processes, and therefore should not be mentioned alongside them on an equal footing.

When referring to outcomes of intergovernmental processes there is a need to highlight all previous conferences that paved the way to our current collective endeavor. In that regard, it is important for Brazil to make explicit reference to the outcome of the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations.

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